

This is BILK # 64 for March 1995. Bilk is published by Ulrich Magin, Fribolinstr. 5, D-74321 Bietigheim-Bissingen, Germany. Subscriptions are DM 15 for Germany and DM 20 for Europe and DM 25 for the rest of the world. Bilk appears 6 times a year.

BEHEMOTH

- Loch Ness: Nessletter 120 has just arrived (published by Rip Hepple, 7 Huntshieldford, St Johns Chapel, Bishop Auckland, Co Durham, DL13 1RQ, UK) - excellent as usual. The new issue contains two very interesting items. 1. There was again a seal in the Loch in the summer of 1994. It was seen by Nessie veterans Rip Hepple, by Alastair Boya and Tony Sharret around Foyers and in Urquhart Bay. I do now tend to view the first wave of sightings of Nessie in 1933 as perhaps caused by a seal, enlarged my misinterpretations of wakes (a lot of examples can be found in Gould's book), otters and hoaxes on tourists (a correspondent for the Neue Mannheimer Zeitung visited the Loch in 1934 and was led by a local guide who promised "a view of the monster", yet the journalist realised his guide had only shown him boat's wakes...) 2. According to new research by Adrian Shine, the large mass of fish in river mouths at the Loch detected by sonar during earlier expeditions may have been due to gas bubbles escaping from the ground. The Loch may be too poor in nutrients to even nourish one long-necked sea serpent! Nessletter 120 also has details on a possible new sighting on June 17, 1993, of a head and neck off Dores.
- Loch Ness: Andreas Trottmann, one of the really dedicated Nessie hunters, intends to publish a press review on Loch Ness. Each issue will contain clips on recent events at the Loch and a section called "Out of my Loch Ness Files" with old press clippings on Nessie sightings. To cover costs, Andreas asks for a subscription of 8 Pounds. I think it is a very good idea, and the first issue that I have seen contains much cryptozoological and sociological information. If you are interested, please contact Andreas (Riedacker, 3158 Guggisberg BE, Switzerland) - he will only continue if there is enough interest in his project. I will keep you informed on the idea which will compliment the Nessletters with a regular update of press reports.
- Loch Ness, bibliography: I still have a large bag of clippings that Andreas has sent me: There is much discussion over proposed plans to turn Borlum Farm, close to Urquhart Castle, into a holiday resort. It appears that Loch Ness - which I found so remarkably unspoilt compared to German tourist sites when I first saw it in 1980 - will now turn into another Disneyland. (Inverness Courier, Okt 11, 1994; Okt 14, 1994). Also a new movie is filmed at Loch Ness. It is a romantic comedy on a Loch Ness researcher falling in love with a local beauty. The author, John Fusco, thinks he saw 3 humps in Urquhart Bay in 1985, but explains them as a trick of the light. The movie will be produced by "Working Title", the company that brought you "Four weddings and a Funeral" (Inverness Courier, Okt 4, 1994, p.8)

ISIS

- The Frankfurter Rundschau (February 18, 1995, p.26) had a short report on "Noticias del Mundo", the Spanish equivalent of the "Weekly World News", published in Madrid. Among the hoaxes mentioned was the story about a computerised confessional chair (although some such instrument was presented to the German press this year) and the headline "Siren in a bathtub". Sorry no details, but we can imagine a story of a surprised fisherman and the one that didn't get away.
- I've just been reading a most interesting book, "Wilde Diplomaten", by Frans de Waal (Carl Hanser, Munich 1991). On p. 187 etc, de Waal discusses the water-ape theory of Hardy, and includes more details on the aquatic life of the Bonobos, a very intelligent species of ape. Although de Waal rejects Morgan's and Hardy's ideas of bipedalism evolving in the ocean, he believes the semi-aquatic habitat of the Bonobo may have contributed to its bipedalism. It lives in jungles close to rivers. The whole book is on ape and human behaviour and techniques of conflict solving. The English original was published in 1989 by Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., under the title: "Peacemaking among Primates".
- Connemara, Ireland: Among the clips sent to me by Andreas Trottmann is one from the Inverness Couriers "174 years ago"-column, reprinting a mermaid sighting they initially brought in their Okt 14, 1819 edition. It reports on several detailed sightings of a mermaid upon the rocks of Derrygimla, Errisbeg, Connemara. The creature was "half female and half fish, her lower extremities having the conformation of a

dolphin." It disappeared when shot at. There are at least as many good sightings of mermaids than of sea serpents, and I often wonder how many different species of sirens a Heuvelman-like "scientific cryptozoologist" would discover when researching these reports. Yet mermaid-sightings are the best example that sightings of alien animals have more in common with cultural studies than biology.

LEVIATHAN

● Russia: The first hint I got of a new sea serpent stranding was Andreas Trottmann's question if I had heard of the monster stranded at Cape Nemetski, Russia, mentioned in "Le Martin", Lausanne, on Okt 26, 1994. I haven't had time to answer him, but here is all I know. My information comes from an unreferenced bit in the "Magazin für Grenzwissenschaften" # 10, 1/95, p.549. It says the carcass of a previous unknown marine animal has been washed ashore close to Cape Nemezki, Russia. According to Russian press reports, the creature is 12m/40 ft long and 1,5m/5 ft wide. The carcass was much mutilated by wave action, so it was quickly identified as a long-necked dinosaur. On close inspection, however, it proved to be the remains of a beaked whale. Similar carcasses have been reported as sea-serpents before, a famous one 1925 at Santa Cruz, California.

CRYPTOZOOLOGY

● A Tasman wolf, believed to be extinct for almost 60 years, has been observed by Charlie Beasley in north-east Tasmania (Ludwigsburger Kreiszeitung, January 28, 1995, p.19)- ● New Chinese hunt for the yeti after sightings by farmers (Welt, Oktober 28, 1994, p.12) - ● sightings and even a videotape of a marauding wolf in the Vosges mountains, France (Welt, January 10, 1995, p.10; Frankfurter Rundschau Jan 10, p. 24) The animal has already killed 82 sheep. - ● Mammouths have survived longer than previously thought. According to Russian scientists, 3730 year old mammouth remains have been discovered on the north-west Siberian island of Wrangel. On the occasion of a Geologist's Conference in Helsinki, scientists Hikmat Arslanov and Marina Kosyрева told reporters the Wrangel specimens were only half the size of the usual mammouths. It had previously been thought that the species had become extinct 10000 years ago. The age of the Wrangel individuals had been ascertained by specialists at St. Petersburg and Arizona, USA, universities. I think a detailed report on the discovery was in one of the recent Fortean Times. (Stuttgarter Zeitung, February 11, p. 24; Stuttgarter Nachrichten, Feb 11, p. 24; Süddeutsche Zeitung, Feb 11, p.12)

USO

● Sweden: I had already mentioned in the last Bilk that the Swedish Navy has admitted that they've been hunting mink, not submarines, in their waters. Now I do have two additional reports from the Cuxhavener Nachrichten (Feb 14, p.4) and the Hamburger Morgenpost (Feb 14, p.7). They report that the previous weekend, Owe Wiktorin, Head of the Swedish Armed Forces, admitted officially that the noises registered during submarine hunts were due to air bubbles released by my swimming mink. Navy officials had identified them as the sound of submarine propellers! The Stockholm Government will now cut all means for submarine hunts of the navy. "We can hardly give them large sums of money for hunting mink", Minister of Defense Thage Pettersson commented the situation. In the last 15 years, the Swedish navy has spent 3 Million Crowns, 200 Million British Pounds) for special instruments and the hunt for unidentified submarine. South of Stockholm a special "centre for analyses" had been constructed. Although the hunts had produced little beside shoals of dead fish, Swedish prime minister Carl Bildt was still protesting against "indefinite" intrusions by Russian subs to Yeltsin in May 1994. May I modestly point out that I did already identify "Soviet Subs" in Sweden as misidentification of waves and animals and compared the situation to Loch Ness, where similar natural phenomena are identified as "strange animal" - each according to its own myth.

That's it again. I hope you liked this issue of Bilk. Next issue, if I find the space, I will list some recent archaeological finds from under the sea, as well as notes on mysterious lakes.